

## Great Torrington woodlands, Devon, 26 June 1999

Leader: **Roy McCormick**.—The weather forecast looked decidedly bad, with rain and thunder promised but it was decided to 'give it a go' with various people, who were interested, being told over the phone that we would be at the prearranged spot at 20.30. I arrived with Peter Franghiadi to find several people had already turned up and the weather was reasonable with slight drizzle and hardly any wind; we were hoping for cloud cover because it was the night before a full moon. We were a dozen altogether with a mixture of Devon Moth Group, BENHS, Butterfly Conservation and Devon Wildlife Trust members; we had one Devonshire Association member and one person with a general interest who left before the night got underway, probably put off by the proposed late finish. We discussed where everybody was to go, with Barry Henwood, Harry Wooltorton, Darren Willetts and Bill Deakins deciding to stay in the track where we had assembled; Peter Franghiadi and I had already planned to go to the next block of woodland owned by Clinton Devon Estates; a four-wheel drive was needed to get to this area. Adrian Henderson put a couple of traps in his own block of woodland just up the road. In all, eleven traps were put out in the three areas.

Peter and I and a couple of DMG members went on to our spot, set up the equipment and put out the wine ropes; by the time we had this finished it was time to go back to the main site to see what had come in. The weather was still holding with the temperature around 15–17 °C; it kept trying to rain but thankfully it did not. The list started to build with one or two good species among the commoner moths. After we had checked out the traps in the main track we returned to our own equipment (Adrian was doing his own check on his traps, reporting back to me later). On the way back my Land Rover had a front wheel puncture in the rutted track leading to our site; a frantic wheel change was carried out, the people with me helping out as best they could; this was around 23.20 and the only lights we had were a torch and a lantern—lucky that the track had a stony base. When we eventually got back to our site and started to look at the traps, the first *Moma alpinum* (scarce merveille-du-jour) had already turned up; this was around 23.45 and it was a fresh female. The list had increased considerably by the time we had finished looking at our lights but no more *M. alpinum* yet so we piled back into the Land Rover and returned to the main track to see how things were progressing. Barry Henwood had taken the rare tortrix *Celypha aurofasciana* (Haw.) and *Phlyctaenia stachydalis* (Germ.) had turned up at two of the sites, Bill Deakins had his first *M. alpinum* and several other good species had come in. Harry was having trouble with his generator so was not doing very well; I found out later that his car had broken down so Harry definitely did not have a good night. The time was around 01.15 and we decided to take our leave so we said our good nights and went back to our site to pack up; at around 01.30 we started to pack up and two more male *M. alpinum* were found; the list by this time was around 100 species but there was nothing on the wine ropes. As we packed up the rain started, gentle at first but increasing and by the time we had finished around 02.00 it was raining lightly; this got worse as we drove home. I think we finished just in time. The final list came to 120 species.

The more interesting species were *Pandemis cinnamomeana* (Treit.); *Celypha aurofasciana* (Haw.); *Eudonia delmella* (Staint.); *Phlyctaenia stachydalis* (Germ.); *Euphyia mangulata* (Haw.) (sharp-angled carpet); *Chloroclystis debiliata* (Hüb.) (bilberry pug); *Hydrelia sylvata* (D. & S.) (waved carpet); *Macaria liturata* (Clerck) (tawny-barred angle) & (probably) f. *nigrofulvata*; *Cleorodes lichenaria* (Hufn.) (brussels lace); *Aetheria bicolorata* (Hufn.) (broad-barred white); *Moma alpinum*

(Osby.) (scarce merveille-du-jour); and *Laspeyria flexula* (D. & S.) (beautiful hook-tip). The best catch of the night was not identified until Sunday. A *Heterogenea asella* (D. & S.) (triangle) was taken with permission from Bill Deakins' trap by Barry Henwood who did not immediately recognise it but on examination on Sunday he identified it as this species. He brought it round to me and I confirmed the identification. There are only two records from the Plymouth and Plymbridge areas from over 100 years ago.

#### Newton Abbot Racecourse, Devon, 9 July 1999

Leader: **Roy McCormick**.—The evening was dry and cloudy with a temperature that held at around 14°C, and it looked as though the Racecourse event could be good for a change; the site has never been very productive but it has produced some good finds. Bernard Barnett, John Muggleton and I arrived to find Mr and Mrs Brown (Devon Moth Group Members) and a Butterfly Conservation Member, Mrs D Dicker and daughter waiting for us; another DMG Member had gone to the wrong place and missed the event.

We made our way to the trapping site and set up my equipment of four traps and did a bit of dusking while waiting for darkness to fall; nothing of note was seen before I started up the generator and once the lights were operating moths started to trickle in slowly. We did one round of the traps with nothing of note seen and Mrs Dicker and daughter decided that they had seen some moths and it was time for them to leave. I think they enjoyed the short stay and saw moths they had never seen before.

On the next round we had elephant hawk and jersey tiger plus a few of the larger moths and felt that it was a shame that Mrs Dicker did not stay that little bit longer. The list crept up as more visits to the traps were made but we had decided that this was not going to be a late night because we had an Exhibition (The Creepy Crawly Show) to go to the following morning. Around 23.30 I set up the 'Robinson' trap and small generator (this was firmly chained to an open barn) and we set about bringing the other equipment in. This trap was started up before we left at around midnight, and was left running until it ran out of fuel; this was collected in the morning prior to the Exhibition. Specimens for this event are collected to be shown live in a cage at the Exhibition and are released after the show; this display creates a great deal of interest with the people who attend the event.

The more interesting of the species seen were one *Calamotropha paludella* (Hüb.) taken outside the 'Robinson'; two *Catoptria falsella* (D. & S.); two *Cleorodes lichenaria* (Hufn.) (brussels lace); one *Thumatha senex* (Hüb.) (round-winged muslin); one *Euplagia quadripunctaria* (Poda) (jersey tiger); one *Callimorpha dominula* (L.) (scarlet tiger); two *Lacanobia suasa* (D. & S.) (dog's tooth) and four *Apamea ophiogramma* (Esp.) (double lobed).

#### Sloden Inclosure and Ladycross, New Forest, Hampshire, 14 August 1999

Leader: **Paul Waring**.—The main aim of this meeting was to see if we could find the dark crimson underwing moth *Catocala sponsa* (L.) in the tract of mature oak woodland in Sloden Inclosure in the north of the New Forest, near Fritham. Since 1995 the Society has held field meetings annually in the New Forest to investigate the status of this species and other rare insects, continuing a long history of visits by the BENHS to this exceptional area. The meeting in 1995 confirmed the presence of both the dark and light crimson underwings *C. sponsa* and *C. promissa* (D. & S.) at five